

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 EA-06 AID-05 EUR-12 EB-07

ACDA-05 OMB-01 TRSE-00 /085 W
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O R 181720Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6748

INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 MANAGUA 1513

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, NU

SUBJECT: REACTIONS TO PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY ADDRESS

REF: STATE 086289

SUMMARY: ALTHOUGH PRESIDENT FORD'S APRIL 10 FOREIGN
POLICY SPEECH RECEIVED LITTLE COVERAGE IN NICARAGUA, DETERIORATING
S.E. ASIA SITUATION HAS BEEN CLOSELY FOLLOWED HERE, AND FUTURE
OF U.S. AS WORLD POWER CURRENTLY POPULAR SUBJECT OF
SPECULATION. NICARAGUANS GENERALLY COMFORTABLE WITH U.S.
POSITION AS PREDOMINANT FOREIGN INFLUENCE IN THEIR COUNTRY,
BUT FEEL U.S. PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA HAVE
SUFFERED SERIOUS SETBACKS FROM EVENTS IN S.E. ASIA. PARTIALLY
AS RESULT OF WEAKENED U.S. POSITION, THEY EXPECT INFLUENCE
OF AUTOGENOUS POWER BLOCS TO GROW, AND LATIN AMERICAN
CONTACTS WITH U.S. COMPETITORS OUTSIDE HEMISPHERE TO INCREASE.
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ALTHOUGH NICARAGUA WILL NOT BE A LEADER IN THESE TRENDS, IT

HAS ALREADY SLIGHTLY SHIFTED AWAY FROM TRADITIONALLY STRONG DEPENDENCE ON U.S. AND NICARAGUAN PERCEPTIONS OF DIMINISHED U.S. PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE AS RESULT OF S.E. ASIA SITUATION MAY SOMEWHAT ACCELERATE MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. PRESIDENT SOMOZA EXPRESSED GREAT CONCERN OVER S.E. ASIA PROBLEM, AND FEELS THAT THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT U.S. INFLUENCE IN LATIN AMERICA DIMINISHED AS RESULT OF DEVELOPMENTS THERE. AT SAME TIME, HE REITERATED THAT NICARAGUA UNDER HIS LEADERSHIP WILL REMAIN CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE UNITED STATES. END SUMMARY.

1. PRESIDENT'S FOREIGN POLICY SPEECH MARCH 10 RECEIVED VERY LIMITED MEDIA COVERAGE HERE, AND WHAT THERE WAS OF IT FOCUSED EXCLUSIVELY ON REQUEST TO CONGRESS FOR INCREASED AID FOR VIETNAM. HOWEVER, WITH DETAILED WIRE SERVICE REPORTING IN LOCAL PRESS, NICARAGUANS HAVE CLOSELY FOLLOWED DETERIORATING SITUATION IN S.E. ASIA, AND IMPLICATIONS OF DEVELOPMENTS THERE VIS-A-VIS U.S. ROLE AS WORLD POWER HAS BECOME POPULAR SUBJECT FOR SPECULATION. EFE STORY CARRIED PROMINENTLY IN BOTH MAJOR DAILIES QUESTIONING U.S. RELIABILITY AS ALLY OF FREE WORLD PERHAPS TOUCHED ACCURATELY ON NICARAGUANS CONCERN OVER U.S. WILL TO HONOR COMMITMENTS TO ALLIES IN ASIA AND EUROPE. CLOSER TO HOME, THEY EXPECT U.S. TO CONTINUE AS OVERWHELMING FOREIGN PRESENCE IN THIS HEMISPHERE, AND ARE FOR MOST PART COMFORTABLE WITH THAT STATE OF AFFAIRS BOTH IN THE AREA IN GENERAL AND IN NICARAGUA SPECIFICALLY.

2. DESPITE THEIR FRIENDLY DISPOSITION TOWARD THE U.S., MOST INFORMED NICARAGUANS FEEL THAT RECENT EVENTS HAVE DEFINITELY DIMINISHED U.S. INFLUENCE AND PRESTIGE, AND EXPECT WEAKENED U.S. POSITION TO BE EXPLOITED IN RESOLVING BILATERAL AND MULTILATERAL LATIN AMERICAN ISSUES. CONCURRENT WITH REDUCED LEVEL OF U.S. INFLUENCE, MANY ANTICIPATE MORE IMPORTANT ROLE FOR AUTOGENOUS POWER BLOCS IN LATIN AMERICA RATHER THAN INCREASED ALIGNMENT WITH OUT COMPETITORS FROM OUTSIDE THE HEMISPHERE. THIS THEY EXPECT NOT SIMPLY AS MEANS TO ASSERT INDEPENDENCE FROM U.S., BUT AS THEIR ECONOMIES EXPAND, TO BROADEN ACCESS TO MARKETS AND RESOURCES WHICH THE U.S. CAN NO LONGER SUPPLY.

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3. NICARAGUA CERTAINLY REMAINS ONE OF THE MOST PRO-AMERICAN COUNTRIES IN THIS HEMISPHERE, BUT ITS OWN MINI-DETENTE HAS BEEN GRADUALLY MANIFESTED OVER THE PAST TWO YEARS IN UNPRECEDENTED GROWTH IN TRADE WITH THE SOCIALIST COUNTRIES (CERP 002 DATED NOVEMBER 21, 1974). THIS TRADE IS STILL VERY SMALL, BUT IS A SIGNIFICANT MARK OF THE TIMES THAT IT IS ROWING IN A COUNTRY WHOSE AVOWEDLY ANTI-MARXIST GOVERNMENTS HAD PREVIOUSLY FORBIDDEN SUCH CONTACT.

IN ADDITION, PRESIDENT SOMOZA, A FIRM FRIEND OF THE U.S., HAS--ALBEIT RELUCTANTLY--JOINED WITH OTHER CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLICS IN EMBRACING VENEZUELAN FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEMES WHICH HAVE THE PRACTICAL EFFECT OF EXPANDING VENEZUELA'S INFLUENCE IN CENTRAL AMERICA TO THE POSSIBLE DETRIMENT OF OUR OWN. BOTH THESE DEVELOPMENTS INDICATE A SLIGHT DRIFT AWAY FROM NICARAGUA'S TRADITIONALLY HEAVY DEPENDENCE ON THE U.S., AND MAY AS THINGS ARE SORTED OUT, BE ACCELERATED BY NICARAGUAN'S PERCEPTIONS OF DIMINISHED U.S. PRESTIGE AND INFLUENCE AS RESULT OF EVENTS IN S.E. ASIA AND ELSEWHERE. NICARAGUA WILL NOT BE A LEADER IN THIS TREND, BUT EXPERIENCE IS PROVING THAT IT CAN BE SWEEPED ALONG AS ITS NEIGHBORS' MOVE IN THESE DIRECTIONS.

4. BARRING SOME UNFORESEEN DEVELOPMENT, NICARAGUA'S RELATIONSWITH U.S. OVER AT LEAST NEXT FIVE YEARS WILL BE PERSONALLY GUIDED BY PRESIDENT ANASTASIO SOMOZA, AND HIS FEELINGS ABOUT PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECH AND S.E. ASIA SITUATION IN GENERAL ARE PARAMOUNT IN ASSESSING GON REACTION. SOMOZA LISTENED TO APRIL 10 SPEECH OVER RADIO, AND IN A VERY SERIOUS MOOD, SPOKE AT LENGTH WITH AMBASSADOR ON SUBJECT APRIL 16. SOMOZA EMPHASIZED FOLLOWING POINTS:

---AS LOYAL FRIEND OF U.S., HE WAS MUCH DISTURBED OVER SITUATION IN S.E. ASIA, BUT LISTENED TO FORD SPEECH WITH FEELING OF HOPELESSNESS BEING CONVICTED THAT U.S. CONGRESS WOULD NOT BE RESPONSIVE TO PRESIDENT'S REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL AID. IN THAT CONTEXT, HE EXPRESSED CONCERN OVER DIFFICULTY FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS NOW HAVE WITH INCREASED POWER OF U.S. CONGRESS IN DETERMINING WHO SPEAKS FOR USG ON FOREIGN POLICY; WHO IS IN CHARGE?

---THERE IS NO QUESTION BUT THAT U.S. INFLUENCE HAS BEEN
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UNDERMINED IN LATIN AMERICA BECAUSE OF S.E. ASIA
DEVELOPMENTS.

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INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 USIE-00

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 MANAGUA 1513

USCINCSO FOR POLAD

---COUNTRIES AROUND THE WORLD ARE ASKING WHERE WILL THE
US DRAW THE LINE (AGAINST COMMUNIST AGGRESSION), PERHAPS
VIETNAM WAS NOT THE RIGHT PLACE, BUT WHERE WILL IT BE?
(SOMOZA REPEATEDLY CAME BACK TO THIS THOUGHT.)
---USING CASE OF PRESIDENT THIEU, BUT PERHAPS Musing
OVER HIS OWN POSITION, SOMOZA OBSERVED THAT ANY LEADER
WHO IS COMPLETELY IDENTIFIED WITH ONE FOREIGN COUNTRY PUTS
HIMSELF IN EXTREMELY DIFFICULT POSITION.
---NOTED THAT PHILIPPINES WERE REASSESSING THEIR SECURITY
ARRANGEMENTS WITH US AND PREDICTED THAT OTHER ASIAN
ALLIES OF US WOULD DO THE SAME.
---AS RESULT OF S.E. ASIA SITUATION, EXPECTS NEXT PROBE OF
US SUPPORT FOR ALLIES TO COME IN SOUTH KOREA, AND IN
LATIN AMERICAN EXPECTS MAJOR PUCH ON PANAMA CANAL ISSUE.
---ALSO VERY CONCERNED ABOUT SITUATION IN PORTUGAL AND
ALTHOUGH UNDERSTANDS PROBLEMS IN DOING SO, BELIEVES US
SHOULD USE MONEY AND INFLUENCE TO CHECK THAT COUNTRY'S MOVE
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TOWARD COMMUNISM.

---IN SPITE OF HIS SERIOUS CONCERNS ABOUT SETBACK IN S.E. ASIA,
SOMOZA EMPHASIZED THAT SO LONG AS NICARAGUA WAS UNDER HIS
LEADERSHIP IT WILL CONTINUE CLOSELY ALIGNED WITH THE UNITED STATES.

5. SUMMARY ASSESSMENT: NICARAGUANS FEEL CLOSE TIES TO
US AND PERCEIVE DETRIMENTAL EFFECT FROM S.E. ASIA

SITUATION ON US ROLE AS WORLD POWER. THEY ANTICIPATE
THAT THIS WILL CONTRIBUTE TO TREND TOWARD INCREASING
INDEPENDENCE FROM US IN LATIN AMERICA. WHILE NICARAGUA
WILL REMAIN ONE OF OUR CLOSEST FRIENDS IN HEMISPHERE,
IT WILL TO CERTAIN EXTENT PARTICIPATE IN THIS MOVEMENT.
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